

~~SECRET~~

DRAFT
26 January 1956

REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS CONCERNING
TELEVISION IN EUROPE

I. INTRODUCTION:

The OCB requested recommendations of courses of action to strengthen television broadcasting facilities and to encourage the use of television in Western Europe. It was requested that consideration be given in the recommendation to the establishment of a television network identified with NATO and to Eurovision ----- The Board's request was to USIA which prepared the original draft. Upon USIA's recommendation the matter was referred to the OCB Committee on Broadcasting and Television.

b. The committee believes that this subject is but part of a global problem pertaining to sound broadcasting as well as television and will prepare supplementary recommendations pertaining to sound broadcasting and to areas other than Europe. This paper deals only with the subject of television and only with Europe.

II. TELEVISION AS A MEDIUM IN THE COLD WAR:

The astonishing growth of world-wide television has surpassed all earlier prognostications. Present indications are that it will, in a few years, rank with the newspaper and radio as a mass medium. There are these capabilities and limitations inherent in television:

~~SECRET~~

SECRET

a. **Capabilities:** Television reaches the illiterate as well as the scholar. Its fascination touches the individual who is indifferent to the radio and the press. It is capable of ----- reaching large numbers of persons quickly. The combination of auditory and visual impact makes it an effective way to convey a psychological message as adroitly as it sells soap.

b. **Limitations:** At the present stage of development television must be defined (for U. S. purposes) as a Free World psychological weapon. Except in isolated (but important) instances, western television does not penetrate the Iron Curtain. Even if technological developments ultimately make long distance telecasting feasible, the signal is unusually susceptible to jamming and control over use of receivers by a determined opposition is a simple matter. A television program is expensive; 10 to 20 times that of a comparable radio program.

III. THE PROBLEM:

It is in the interest of the United States to take actions to:

- a. Utilize overseas television to disseminate information in support of U. S. foreign policy objectives.
- b. To aid and encourage friendly and neutral countries, unilaterally and in collaboration with each other, to develop their own television capabilities to support common objectives.

SECRET

SECRET

c. To inhibit communist efforts to exploit free world television audiences.

d. Where possible, to utilize television in the Soviet bloc to reach the peoples of communist countries.

IV. EUROPEAN TELEVISION SITUATION:

a. Free World Countries (See Annex ____ "Survey of ____ European Television" as well as Annex ____ "Eurovision".) Television is firmly established in Great Britain and Western Europe. A network-- "Eurovision"--connects Britain, France, Italy, Switzerland, West Germany, Denmark, the Netherlands and Belgium. Austria, Spain and Sweden will probably join this system. Norway, Finland, Portugal and even Yugoslavia are potential participants, once their national systems are established. Filmed output of this network can be expected to find audiences elsewhere, e. g. Latin America and Eurovision can supplement its programs by films from other areas.

b. USSR and European Satellites (See Annex ____ "Television in the Soviet Orbit".) The USSR has begun an ambitious program, with the obvious intention to eventually have a network ----- covering the USSR and the European satellites. Some Soviet stations even now are so located that their telecasts are capable of reception in peripheral areas of the West. Exchange agreements with other nations (e. g. Britain, Switzerland) are increasing the Soviet material to be seen on Free World stations.

SECRET

~~SECRET~~

East Germany, Czechoslovakia, and Poland have established television services, while Hungary, Rumania and Bulgaria operate experimental stations. The strategic location of stations in areas bordering Western Europe (e. g. Tallin, Bratislava, East Berlin) disclose communist intention to reach Western audiences by direct telecasts.

V. POSSIBLE COURSES OF U.S. ACTION:

a. Toward the Objective to "Utilize Overseas Television to Disseminate Information in Support of U. S. Foreign Policy Objectives":

- (1) Supply attributed and nonattributed materials such as films scripts, live performances by U. S. traveling groups such as "Porgy and Bess."
- (2) Filmed or live presentation by visiting American officials, -----
educators, scientists, businessmen, etc.
- (3) Cooperation with private industry for the introduction of appropriate materials in the commercial TV film services provided by NBC, CBS, et al to foreign television systems.

b. Toward the Objective to "Aid and Encourage Friendly and Neutral Countries, Unilaterally and in Collaboration with Each Other, to Develop Their Own Television Capabilities to Support Common Objectives":

- (1) Technical advice in the establishment of adequate television systems.

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

(2) Advice concerning appropriate methods of defraying the cost of TV systems whether by taxation, licensing, sale of time for advertising or in combination.

(3) Professional advice in programming.

(4) Unattributed program assistance (for which the need is great and for which the U.S. has abundant resources), including films of special events and cooperatively produced programs.

(5) Technical assistance in the indigenous production or assembly of receivers.

(6) Advice to and support of Eurovision.

(7) Judicious financial support where appropriate.

c. Toward the Objective "To Inhibit Communist Efforts to

Exploit Free World Television Audiences":

(1) The free nations have a natural leaning toward Western culture and the best way to inhibit communist program penetration is to support European television systems, including their efforts to help each other (e. g. Eurovision) and thereby make unnecessary their reliance upon communist help.

(2) The TV standards adopted by the Soviet bloc (625 lines - 5 mc/s bandwidth - 25 frames) differ from and are not compatible with those so far adopted by Western Europe, hence their telecasts

~~SECRET~~

SECRET

cannot be received on Western receivers without costly alterations.

It is therefore important to prevail upon all countries bordering the orbit to adopt Western standards.

(3) Indigenous manufacture or assembling of receivers will naturally result in tariff barriers making widespread export of communist manufactured sets, capable of receiving communist telecasts, unlikely.

(4) Constant vigilance of the program output of communist TV and dissemination of counterpropaganda should be undertaken. To this end it will be necessary to undertake adequate monitoring of communist TV output including the films supplied under their exchange programs.

(5) (It is feasible to jam communist telecasts from contiguous areas. It is not however recommended that this extreme measure be undertaken at this time since it would be in contravention of U. S. policy to encourage free exchange of information.)

d. Toward the Objective to "Utilize Television in the Soviet Bloc

to Reach Peoples of the Communist countries":

(1) Induction through normal U. S. commercial channels of appropriate U. S. materials into the items supplied TV systems in the Soviet orbit.

(2) Persuade friendly countries to similarly supply appropriate materials in their exchange arrangements with Soviet countries.

SECRET

~~SECRET~~

(3) Encourage the Eurovision group countries to tie communist bloc nations into Eurovision but with adequate safeguards against such arrangements being counterproductive.

(4) Telecasts on Soviet bloc standards from peripheral points (e. g. West Berlin).

VI. PRESENT U. S. ACTIVITIES:

(A brief description of U. S. programs and plans, with detailed annexes if required, including USIA program support activities and Paris center, ICA's technical assistance programs, State's Leader Grant programs, Defense's overseas TV activities, and a general reference to related support activities. Round number estimates of available funds might be included.)

VII. SUMMARY:

(This chapter would balance what we are doing against what needs to be done, the problems (appropriations, manpower, etc.) and suggested priorities (Berlin, Vienna, Yugoslavia, Eurovision, etc.)

~~SECRET~~

SECRET

VIII. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- a. The Department of State, the United States Information Agency, International Cooperation Administration and the Department of Defense be requested to undertake actions ~~of defense~~ to achieve the objectives in Chapter III and the Central Intelligence Agency be requested to support such actions.
- b. The Board approve this report as guidance in planning such actions.
- c. Eurovision, Berlin, Austria, Yugoslavia and Finland be considered problems requiring urgent consideration.
- d. The Committee on Broadcasting and Television be instructed to assist in coordinating such actions on behalf of OCB and to submit a report of progress not later than _____ (date).

SECRET